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CONTENTS

Chairman's report for 1983 - John Kokwaro - 64

A birdwatching safari in Northeastern Province - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 65

Ten great places to see birds. Part 3 - 71

An extraordinary new Butterfly record for the African mainland - - - - - - 73

Rodents in Kajiado - 73

The roar of a Crocodile in West Pokot - 75

Strange behaviour of a Variable Sunbird at Miotoni - - - - - - - - - - - - - 75

Harambee rearing of Owls - 78

An eminent East African botanist retires - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 79

Reviews - 80

New book for sale - 82

Letters to the Editor - 82

Notice to Wednesday morning birdwalkers - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 83

For Sale - 83

Symposium - 83

Society Notices - 84

Wanted - 84

Society Functions - 85

Notice to anyone interested in birds - 86

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1983 - JOHN KOKWARO

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all members present to the Annual General Meeting, reporting that the Society's activities had improved tremendously during the latter half of 1983. Many members living in Nairobi quickly realised the difficulties facing the Society and promptly offered their voluntary assistance to the Society's office. The volunteers worked hand in hand with the Executive Committee and most of the problems were quickly resolved.

The outgoing chairman, Mr J.S. Karmali, continued to work with the new committe on Society affairs and greatly assisted the Hon. Treasurer in streamlining the accounting system. It was through this team work that the Committee was able to present the Society's properly audited accounts at the A.G.M. This had not been the case during the previous few years, when the accounts were published in the *Bulletin* after the A.G.M.

The Chairman reported on specific items as follows:

PUBLICATIONS The *Bulletin* appeared regularly after the last A.G.M. under the editorship of Mrs Daphne Backhurst, who was thanked by members.

Scopus and the Annual Bird Report, which are produced by the Ornithological Sub-Committee, continued to appear regularly.

The printers of *Birds of East Africa* were finally paid in full after some adjustments had been agreed covering the defective copies.

The Reptiles and Amphibians of Zanzibar and Pemba Islands by R. Pakenham was a major publication in the *Journal of the East Africa Natural History Society and National Museum*, which appeared in December 1983 as No. 177.

Our Society has been appointed the sole distributors in tropical Africa for the flora parts of the *Flora of Tropical East Africa* by the publishers The Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew, England. The Society will receive a commission of 25% on each copy sold.

LIBRARY The extensions to the Library were completed during 1983 through a generous donation from the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi. A letter of thanks was sent to the High Commissioner on behalf of the Society by your Chairman; the High Commissioner later officially opened the Library extension.

A request by several members that the Library should remain open during the lunch hour has been discussed with the Director of the National Museums, and the Library is currently staying open at those times on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If there is sufficient support this service will continue.

THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS were revised and were published in the *Bulletin* towards the end of 1983. This was after approval had been obtained at the A.G.M in 1982. The new rates became effective from January 1984.

There was a slight drop in the 1983 membership figures, probably due to the problems encountered at the beginning of the year.

GESTETNER DUPLICATING MACHINE In May 1983 the Society was privileged to receive a very generous donation of Sh.38 904 from Mr Hassan Rattansi, Chairman of the Rattansi Educational Trust towards the purchase of a new Gestetner duplicating machine. A letter of thanks was sent to Mr Rattansi on behalf of the Society, and Mr Karmali was thanked for his assistance in this and many other matters.

I would like to thank the following people who have indeed eased my task in running the Society's affairs throughout the year: All those voluntary workers who have made a tremendous contribution in keeping the Society office running. In particular I am most grateful to the following ladies without whose support nothing would have been achieved - Hilary Fletcher, Catherine Smalley, Gloria Hitchcock, Janet Stanforth, Barbara Bryan, Sally Johnston and Christina Toms

Dr A.D. Lewis, the Vice Chairman of the Society for his continuous support and assistance.

Dr S.G. Njuguna, the Hon. Treasurer, for his extreme dedication to the to the Society's financial affairs

Mr A.H. Simpson for his invaluable services in checking and auditing the Society's accounts.

Mrs Lise Campbell and Mr D.K. Richards for organising the functions and Mrs Fleur Ng'weno for organising the regular Wednesday morning bird walk and the informal Sunday outings. Special thanks to Mrs Campbell, who has now retired from the Executive Committee after serving as the functions organiser for many years.

Mr M.E.J. Gore and Ms Shareen Karmali, the Joint Editors of the *Journal*, under whose supervision numbers 177, 178 and 179 were produced. Both have now resigned from the Executive Committee due to other commitments, and I thank them for their services.

Mr Richard Leakey, the Director of the National Museums of Kenya, for allowing the Society to use the Lecture Hall, the Board Room and the office facilities for our various activities. Very cordial relations have been maintained between the Society and the Museum, especially in the running of the Joint Library.

The Chairman concluded his report by thanking all members present at the A.G.M. for their continued support of the Society, and particularly requested that those members resident in Nairobi, with a little time to spare, should continue their voluntary efforts by helping in the Society office. He also exhorted members to support Society functions, such as lectures and field trips, as regularly as possible.

The chairman then called upon the Hon. Treasurer to present his report.

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A BIRDWATCHING SAFARI IN NORTH-EASTERN PROVINCE PART 1

INTRODUCTION

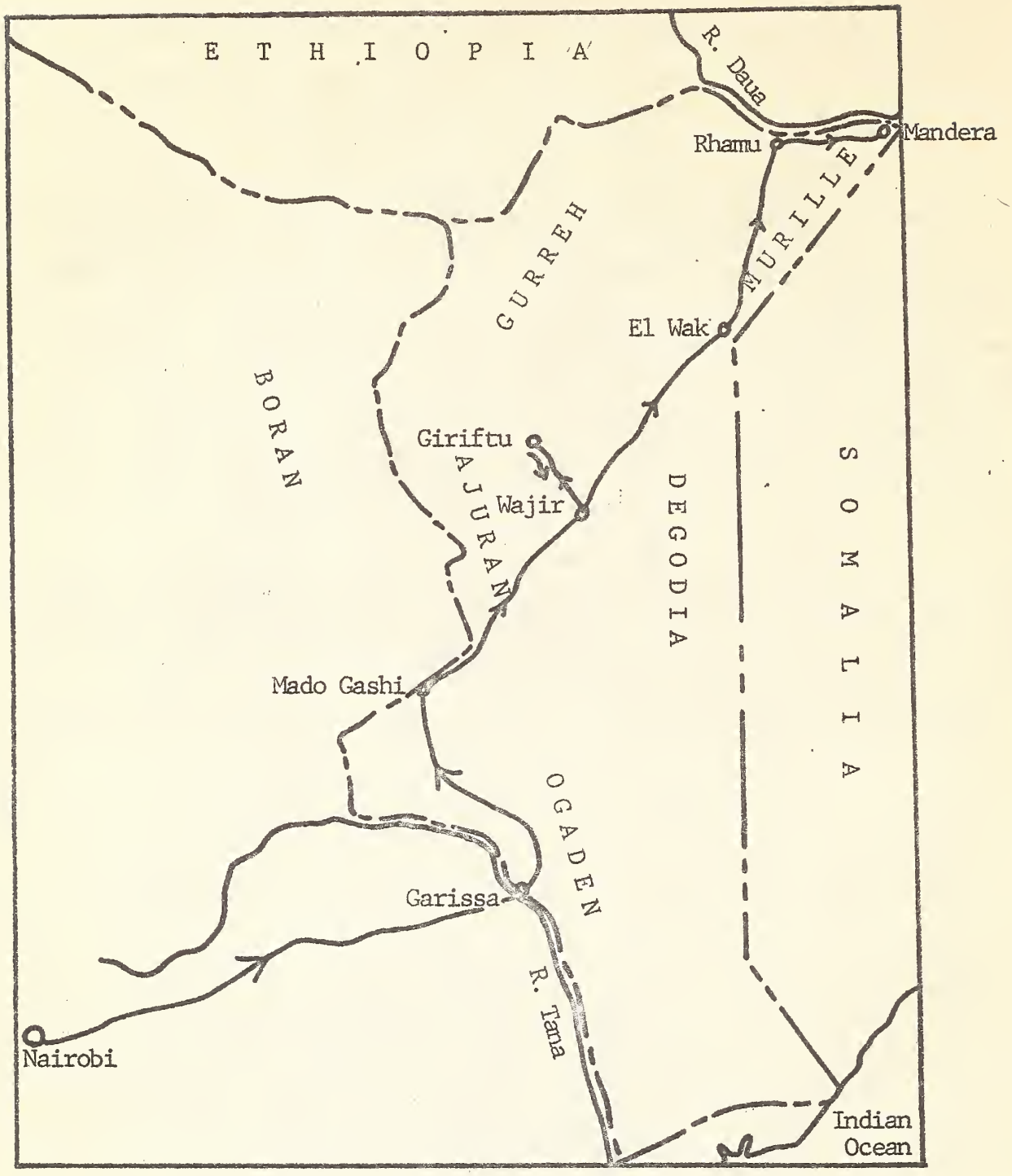
There were two objectives for this safari: firstly, for both of us, Rosalie Osborn and Adan Alio, to acquaint ourselves with the birdlife in North-Eastern Province and to record new species for the quarter degree squares in the Kenya Bird Atlas now being compiled by the East Africa Natural History Society; and secondly for Rosalie to assess the five Somali second-year students from Egerton College who were doing their Field Attachment in different parts of the province. Only the first objective is described.

The safari lasted 20 days, from Friday 29 July 1983 when Rosalie travelled 374 km from Nairobi by bus to join Adan in Garissa, until we flew back from Mandera to Nairobi on Wednesday 17 August. The intervening distance of about 750 km from Garissa to Mandera was travelled mainly in commercial lorries. The accompanying map shows our route and the towns stayed at. The dates spent at each place are given in Table 2.

LANDSCAPE, CLIMATE AND NATURAL HISTORY

The land area of North-Eastern Province is 126 902 km²; this is 22.5% of Kenya's total land area of 564 162 km² (Kenya, 1982). North-Eastern Province is mainly flat and low-lying. There are, however, undulations such as the Yabi Hills which lie south of El Wak and the Gari and Bamba Hills which lie some distance north of El Wak. Further north across the Ethiopian border the land is much more hilly. The altitude generally increases from south to north: Garissa is 137 m above sea level and Rhamu is 298 m a.s.l.

MAP OF OUTWARD ROUTE SHOWING TRIBES



0 100 200 300 400 km.

0 100 200 300 miles

Scale 1 : 4,000,000

Key

Road taken

International boundary

Boundary of North-Eastern Province

The geology and soils of the province are described by Swarzenski and Mundorff (1977) and by Sombroek *et al.* (1982). The extensive plains over which we travelled are formed partly of sedimentary deposits of Pliocene to Recent age derived from ancient Basement System rocks, predominantly gneisses. This area is characterised by well drained red sands and sandy clay loams (Aronosols with Luvisols and Acrisols). There are less pervious brown loams (Solenetz) elsewhere on the plains and Fluvisols are found along the few river beds. Jurassic-Cretaceous sedimentary rocks underly much of the north-east section, the limestones giving rise to calcareous soils. Well-drained dark reddish-brown calcareous clays (Luvisols) are found on the plains while shallow stony calcareous loams (Cambisols) occur around El Wak and on the hills in the north. The Lorian Swamp which is north east of Mado Gashi consists of a grey clay (Gleysol) which becomes very dusty in the dry season and sticky during the rains.

The climate is harsh, being very hot and very dry. Temperatures are high throughout the year, with little monthly variation. August is the 'cool' season, but was still hot. The evaporation rate is high and the relative humidity is low. There is little rain. In Mado Gashi, Giriftu, El Wak and Rhamu, the March to May period is the main rainy season, with the greatest disparity between the rainy seasons at Giriftu and the least at El Wak. At Garissa most of the rain falls in October, November and December and at Wajir from October to January. Quantitative data is given in Table 1.

The province suffers from a paucity not only of rain but also of rivers. The only permanent river in the area is the River Tana, but that is, except at Carissa , 5 km beyond the south-west boundary of the province. The River Daua on the northeastern border is the next largest, but is dry for three months each year from January to March. Most of the other streams marked on maps are so temporary as to be usually non-existent. There are no lakes, only seasonal marshes. The only other sources of water are the man-made wells such as at Wajir, Giriftu and El Wak and some boreholes, dams and natural ponds in other places. Permanent settlements are restricted to the few areas with permanent water.

A long-term project assisted financially by the U.S. Agency for International Development was started in 1968 to increase livestock production by installing boreholes and dams in areas under-utilized due to lack of water, but many of the pumps are no longer in use due to breakdowns. Most of the province was divided by tracks into about twenty Grazing Blocks.

The vegetation is fairly uniform and is typical of semi-arid areas at this latitude and altitude: it consists of *Acacia-Commiphora* bushland. There is a variety of species of *Acacia* bushes and of *Commiphora* trees, with *Aristida* being the predominant grass, particularly in overgrazed areas and around El Wak, where it is called "pilla". *Delonix elata*, a tree with a beautiful yellow flower, occurs more commonly around Tarbaj, a little way north of Wajir. Scattered thickets occur from Tarbaj north to the Ethiopian border. The trees do not exceed 10 m in height and most shed their leaves during the dry seasons as a measure to reduce loss of water. The Lorian Swamp is now grassland with patches of woody vegetation.

Wildlife has been protected in the past, since Somalis do not hunt wild mammals for food although the bandits do. Typical dry-country species such as reticulated giraffe, gerenuk and dik-dik are still fairly common, though of low density due to the dryness of the area and its vegetation. Hyaenas, lions and other carnivores still live there. Elephants have suffered greatly from poachers during the last ten years, like elsewhere in the country. They still occur in considerable numbers, however, with other wildlife in the bandit-inhabited country west of Rhamu from where they migrate into neighbouring Ethiopia.

PEOPLE

The human population of North-Eastern Province was 373 787 at the time of

TABLE 1

METEOROLOGICAL DATA

	GARISSA	*MADO GASHI*	*WAJIR*	*GIRIFTU*	*EL WAK*	*RHAMU*
Registered No. of Meteorological Station	90.39000	89.39000	88.40000	87.39001	87.40000	86.41001
Latitude	0°28'S	0°43'N	1°45'N	2°01'N	2°47'N	3°56'N
Longitude	39°38'E	39°11'E	40°04'E	39°45'E	40°57'E	41°14'E
Altitude	137 m	243 m	243 m	289 m	365 m	298 m
Temperature (Garissa: E.A.C.S.O., 1867) °C (" E.A. Community,) (1972, etc.)						
Mean maximum	34°C		34°C			
Absolute maximum	41°C		36°C			
Mean minimum	22°C		22°C			
Absolute minimum	14°C		21°C			
Mean	28°C		28°C			
Rainfall (E.A. Community 1974)						
Approximate mean annual	320 mm	245 mm	356 mm	307 mm	335 mm	266 mm
Numbers of years averaged	40	9	46	5	20	11
Wet seasons: major	Oct.-Dec.	Mar.-May.	Oct.-Jan.	Mar.-May	Mar.-May	Mar.-May
minor	Mar.-May	Oct.-Dec.	Mar.-May.	Oct.-Dec	Oct.-Dec.	Oct.-Dec.

of the national census in August 1979, which was 2.4% of Kenya's total of 15 327 061 (Kenya 1982). The density is thus only about 3 people / km² and one can travel many kilometres without encountering anyone. The inhabitants are Somalis and all speak the Somali language, except for the Gurreh and Ajuran tribes whose mother tongue is closer to that of the Boran living adjacent to them in the west. The distribution of the main Somali tribes is shown on the map.

The Somalis are purely pastoralists and lead a nomadic way of life, except for those who live in towns. The nomads move from one area to another in search of better pasture for their livestock. Camels and donkeys transport the houses, which, being made of woven mats supported by poles, can be dismantled completely. Like any other nomadic people, they value the number animals more than their quality and hence each wife and her family keep a large herd. This has a major impact on the vegetation around the watering places - wells, boreholes and dams - especially those at the towns. Thus the towns are surrounded by an ever-widening bare, dusty eroding band into which the ever-expanding settlement creeps and from which the bushland birds disappear.

Livestock form the main food source of the nomads, who use the milk and meat but not the blood. Most nowadays buy maize flour, wheat flour, rice, tea and sugar, for which they raise money by selling milk and animals in the towns. Vegetables are almost unknown, except where they are cultivated along the Tana and Daua Rivers.

All towns have a dispensary or hospital. The nomads rely mainly on their herbalists for treatment of illness and injury, partly because they are usually a at least a day's walk from modern health facilities.

All Somalis are Muslim, despite recent Christian missions in the province. Converts are very few indeed. Traditional education was entirely religious: boys had to learn all the Koran by heart in Arabic and were taught to read and write the script. The education of girls was similar but less profound. Instruction was carried out by a teacher, *maalim*, to the children of several manyattas in an area, who gathered daily at a central spot, *dugsi*.

Western education has spread and increased considerably since Independence in 1963. There is now at least one primary school with boarding facilities in every town, small or large. There are seven secondary schools in the province, all accommodating boarders; only one, at Garissa, is for girls. Many nomadic families do not send their children to school because they rarely visit towns and because boys are needed to tend the livestock and girls have to collect firewood and water and perform many other domestic duties.

SAFARI CONDITIONS

Everything mentioned below was as we found it in August 1983 and circumstances may since have changed. Rosalie found it helpful to be in the company of a Somali who was acquainted with all the towns and conditions; he looked after her well.

TRAVEL

The big question regarding travelling is whether to journey in one's own vehicle or by public transport. We decided to use the latter for several reasons. It was far cheaper - only Ksh. 290/- for the 1 100 or so kilometres from Nairobi to Mandera. Saloon cars are almost non-existent in North-Eastern Province and spare parts are probably only obtainable from Nairobi. Further, one might be 200 km from the nearest non-Government mechanic. One is not permitted by government to stop between towns even in one's own car to birdwatch or camp because of the security situation.

For the safety of travellers, government regulations decree that all vehicles travel either in armed convoy or with a minimum of four armed men in a lone vehicle. This service is provided by government free. The convoys

started at Ukasi, which is about 1½ hours journey beyond Mwingi and a little over half way to Garissa, and continued to Mandera. Due to the long distances between towns as well as the risk of breakdown and of bandits, convoys leave the towns in the morning. Passengers have to be at the departure point by 7.30 am, though they may then have to wait an hour or two for the escort. If, however, the convoy is missed, one will have to wait for up to four days until enough vehicles arrive to form the next one. There is no travelling by night

Public transport from Nairobi via Garissa consists of buses as far as Wajir; after that, it is by lorries. A bus leaves Nairobi daily before dawn for Garissa (the Garissa Express and the Kugeria bus services go on alternate days, the former leaving from the Country Bus Station and the latter from River Road). The Garissa Express runs another service between Garissa and Wajir, leaving each place on alternate mornings. On the lorries, one may have the privilege (?) of sitting in the driver's cabin: this is very hot but is sheltered from the sun. Riding in the back of the lorry with everyone else, perched on top of an extraordinary depth of cargo, is much cooler due to the wind, but one is exposed to the sun for many long hours. The buses and lorries stop very occasionally at places in the bush where tea and /or milk are sold, which helps to lessen the dehydration. It is advisable to take water in case of breakdown and also to buy oranges before leaving Nairobi. The only dusty part was the Lorian Swamp. At El Wak we heard that a 'matatu' travelled daily along the tarmac road from Rhamu to Mandera and we looked forward to that comparative luxury. Alas, at Rhamu we found that the 'matatu' was just another lorry, which we shared with over 50 people, 10 shoats (sheep and goats) and a donkey!

The return journey, from Mandera to Nairobi, we did by air, in a 'miraa' plane. At least one 4-seater plane arrives daily at Mandera bringing miraa (a drug chewed by Somalis) from Nairobi. The cost of a seat for its return journey is arrived at by barter and varied then from K.Sh.400 to 1 000 (the prices have since increased considerably).

CLOTHING

On a lorry, a brimmed hat tied under the chin and 'kangas' wrapped around all exposed parts of the body prevent sunburn. Trousers for women are not in tune with local custom; a tough kanga, though not local costume, was an adequate substitute for most activities, but presented difficulties (not insurmountable) when climbing up into the back of a lorry.

ACCOMMODATION, DRINK AND FOOD

The only reasonably good public accommodation stayed in was the Nile Hotel at Garissa. All places were cheap, maximum Sh.20/- per bed per night. The Camel Restaurant looked a fairly good lodging place at Wajir, but we were most kindly offered accommodation and meals by the District Range Officer, Mr Mohamed Yusuf, whom neither of us had met before. From El Wak we walked ten kilometres westwards through the bush and spent two nights at the Somali manyatta where Adan's married sister and married brother lived - a memorable experience. Every drop of water had to be carried daily by camel or donkey from the wells at El Wak. There was no hotel at Rhamu. Here, as at El Wak, we stayed with local residents (see Acknowledgements). To all these hospitable people we were, and are, most grateful.

River water is used at Garissa, Mado Gashi, Rhamu and Mandera, and should therefore always be boiled before drinking. Water at Wajir, Giriftu and El Wak is from wells and is safe to drink, though saline and unpleasant tasting. The Somali 'chai' (tea) was, of course, safe to drink and tasted absolutely wonderful; it kept Rosalie going throughout the safari. She found it too hot to feel hungry, but Adan ate a lot of the Somali food.

SERVICES

There is a public electricity supply at Garissa, Wajir and Mandera. Telephones, beer and other alcoholic beverages and a bank are available at Garissa

but not beyond. With a letter of introduction from a senior civil servant to the District Commissioner, Mandera, Rosalie was able to cash a Nairobi cheque; similar facilities were available at the D.C.'s Office, Wajir.

Part 2 will appear in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

Rosalie M. Osborn, Range Management Department, Egerton College, Private Bag, P.O. Njoro.
Adan M Alio, Egerton College, Block E, R8, P.O. Box 97, Njoro.

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TEN GREAT PLACES TO SEE BIRDS IN KENYA : PART 3

Parts 1 and 2 of this series appeared in issues of the *Bulletin* during 1983, *EANHS Bulletin* 1983:65-71 and 1983:83-87, and in those I had covered six of the ten places promised in the title. There has, since then, been the odd (some would say, the very odd) letter enquiring about the remaining four places and I had in fact started gathering notes for them - the Mt. Kenya highland forest, the lower western forest of Kakamega, the Magadi Road and Lake Magadi and another area - only to be overtaken by events in the shape of Ray Moore's *Where to watch birds in Kenya*, which is now available from the Society Office at K.Sh.150 for EANHS members (well below the prices in Nairobi bookshops) or Sh. 175 for non-members.

But there are two points to be made. Firstly, although a detailed review of Ray's book will appear in the *Bulletin*, I would just like to say here that I fully recommend it: it is comprehensive, and it will take you to a host of places that are both beautiful and good for birdwatching.

Secondly, having said that, I would make the minor criticism that it fails to tell birdwatchers where there are like-minded people who might significantly enhance their birdwatching. There are not many of these, it is true, yet to describe the birds of Baringo and *not* mention the presence there of a resident bird guide is to me an omission, while I feel that the reader is missing out considerably if he reads about the birds of Kongelai, Kapenguria and Cherangani without hearing of Tim Barnley.

Thus it seems worthwhile to continue to relay details of good hospitality in good bird areas. In this context, here is an account of El Karama Ranch, which is situated on the banks of the Uaso Nyiro River, northwest of Nanyuki.

Here, again, is that superb combination of beautiful country, good birdwatching, cheap accommodation and people interested in birds and in general natural history.

Most of the El Karama area is an open, breezy and thoroughly invigorating upland, at about 2 000 m on the plateau to the north of the Aberdares, with superb views of them, Mt. Kenya and the Loldaiga Hills. There are areas of acacia bush and open grassland, but the habitats are significantly diversified by shallow gullies and river valleys with lush thickets, and by the permanently flowing Uaso Nyiro, which is lined by tall Yellow-barked Acacias. On top of all this there are several dams.

The area is of just the type to attract a great variety of birds because it is on the boundary of two of Kenya's major ecological units, and the bird atlas list (square 50d) submitted by Lavinia Grant, the rancher's wife, is enormous. Thus at 2 000 m it is higher than Nairobi and, at least in its lusher, riverine areas, is in a position to hold many of Kenya's highland birds. But it is also on the southern edge of Kenya's arid, lowlying north, so that species such as Somali Fiscal and star-spotted Nightjar reach the southern edges of their ranges here. Of particular interest are the Ethiopian Swallows that breed on the ranch's house: this appears to be one of the very

few breeding sites in the interior of Kenya. Students of "cisticolana" will find less of interest, however: both Winding and Singing seem to be absent, even in the lush riverine habitats, though Rattling is everywhere, and we did have the great spectacle of Pectoral-patch in full, cloud-scraping display flight over the grassy moorlands.

And of course game flocks in to the permanent water: over 60 species have been recorded so far, with specialities including large numbers of Reticulated Giraffe, a herd of Grevy's Zebra, Beisa Oryx, Hippo and, periodically, herds of hundreds of elephants.

The accommodation is in comforatable, permanent tents under thatched roofs, very pleasantly situated on the banks of the Uasu Nyiro. For Kshs. 35 per person per night, you hire a tent for two or three people with beds, mattresses, tables, chairs, wash-basins, bucket, shower, water for washing, 'long-drop' toilet, firewood, barbecue fire-places, meat safe etc, and for a low additional fee (substantially reduced if booked in advance), you can hire all cutlery, crockery, cooking utensiles, bedding, oil lamps plus fuel, thermos flask etc. - in fact all you really need to bring is yourself, you food and NB. ALL YOUR DRINKING WATER. The ranch is entirely private land and the camp has day and night askaris, so that belongings can be left in the tents in safety. The river provides fishing (bring you own tackle) and, being free from both crocodiles and bilharzia, swimming too. A word of warning - the altitude can make the area quite chilly at night and in the early, birdwatching morning.

The ranch is 42 km from Nanyuki and four-wheel drive is really only necessary when it is actually raining; in dry weather, saloon cars can reach the ranch easily. If you require less than five of the tents, book directly through Mr. I.G.P. Grant, El Karama Ranch, PO Box 172, Nanyuki (tel: Laikipia 34Y2), who will send you a full brochure of the facilities and costs, and an accurate and helpful map of the route from Nanyuki. If you require more than five of the tents, and this would be a very good venue for a group outing, book through Mr. Grant AND AA travel. In any case, book EARLY for peak periods, as this is a popular spot.

And the people interested in birds and in nature generally are of course the ranchers, Guy and Lavinia Grant. They employ no specific bird guides, but Lavinia will be pleased to advise visitors on good areas of the ranch for birds - its worth visiting her at the ranch house in any case to see both the Ethiopian Swallows and her superb drawings and paintings of birds: her ability to capture birds on paper, often from quite brief views, draws my full admiration. Ard while there is no bird guide, trackers can be hired (K sh.10 per person for 2 hours) for walks through the ranch, to see game, birds etc. With the large amount of game in the area, the services of these gentlemen might be useful if your're unaccustomed to going on foot in "the Bush".

In summary, a beautiful spot, cheap and certainly good for birds.

Adrian D. Lewis, Geology, Box 30197, Nairobi.

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AN EXTRAORDINARY NEW BUTTERFLY RECORD FOR THE AFRICAN MAINLAND

On 7 March, 1984 we recorded a *Hypolymnas bolina* female from the lava forest at Kibwezi. This is an oriental butterfly with its eastern most records as a migrant where it has been recorded from Socotra, Mauritius and Madagascar.

The specimen caught was not of the Madagascan morph female, but the females of the species are highly pleomorphic. It was a fresh specimen which obviously had bred or emerged there, although slightly small in size, however this is not of great significance as owing to lack of rain at the end of 1983 many species are undersized this season. The butterfly breeds on Acanthacae of which there are several species at Kibwezi.

What is interesting to speculate is how the species arrived there, to which two possibilities could be simply suggested: In December 1983 we had unseasonal rain which was understood to have been the result of turbulent weather in the Indian Ocean, and maybe a migrant female of *H. bolina*, which is common in the Orient, was carried over and oviposited in Kibwezi of which one of the emergent population was captured.

The second possibility is that a population of *H. bolina* comprising several pupae (the larvae are gregarious) were carried over with freight which was transported by rail or road and these insects emerged at Kibwezi and succeeded in breeding; or that this was a female that had emerged from freight and was caught soon afterwards.

A return visit two days later to the same spot and an intensive search for further specimens was unsuccessful.

It would be interesting to know if anyone else has had experiences similar to this with butterflies or insects on this part of the Continent?

Steve Collins, Box 14308, Nairobi.

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RODENTS IN KAJIADO

In 1977-78, when the rains were exceptionally good and the preceding drought had reduced the grazing pressure from domestic livestock to a very low level, the grassland around Kajiado looked like a luxuriant hayfield. At this time the rodent population increased to spectacular levels, and it was commonplace to see sacks of maize-meal slung in trees outside the Masai bomas to keep them away from the rats. There was an outbreak of bubonic plague (a disease of rats, transmitted to other rats and humans by rat fleas) centred around Lengesim to the north of Amboseli, having spread from Tanzania where it is endemic.

I was living in Kajiado on the edge of the bush with three cats, all of them diligent hunters. They used to bring in rodents of a number of species, many of which I have not seen there before or since. Such of these trophies as were not too battered were stored in the freezer and later taken to the Museum for identification. A list of the species is given below. (Nomenclature follows M.J. Delany , 1975 The rodents of Uganda *Brit. Mus. (Nat Hist)* Publ. No.764).

Acomys subspinosus (Waterhouse)	spiny mouse
Arvicanthis niloticus (Desmarest)	grass mouse
Dendromus melanotis Smith	tree mouse
Graphiurus murinus (Desmarest)	doormouse
Lemniscomys barbarus Linnaeus	striped grass mouse
L. striatus (Linnaeus)	punctated grass mouse
Praomys (Mastomys) natalensis (Smith)	coucha panya

Mus minutoides Smith	pygmy mouse
M. triton (Thomas)	
Steatomys parvus Rhoads	fat mouse
Tatera nigricauda (Peters)	black-tailed gerbil

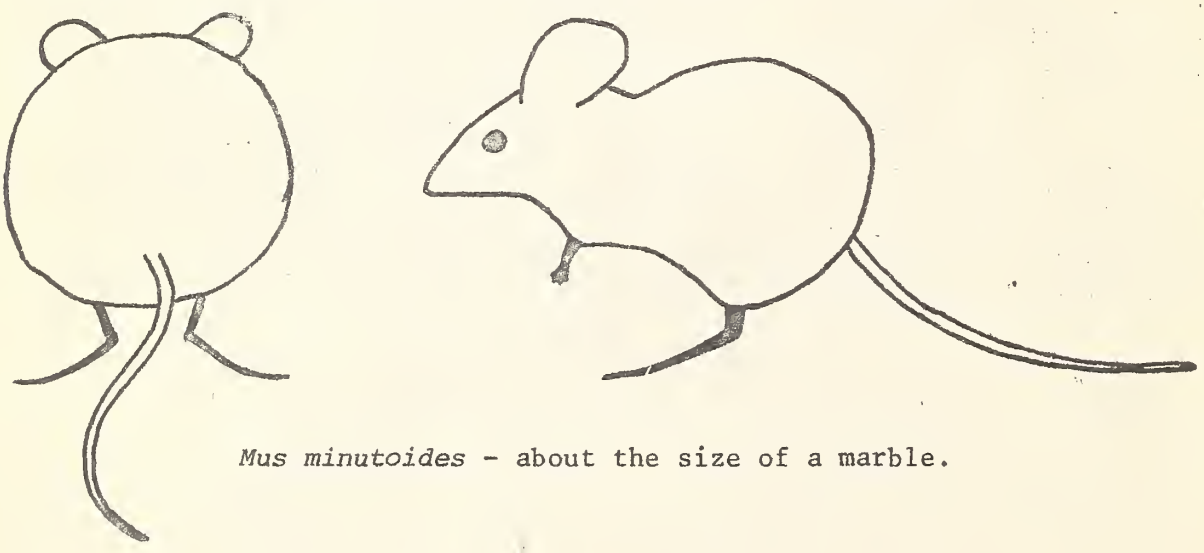
Occasionally a trophy (usually a very small mouse) was brought in alive, and I tried to keep some of these. The most successful species was the tiny *M. minutoides*. Two of these were caught as juveniles, and I kept them for over two years, until one was accidentally killed. The survivor lived for a further year, in the company of several newcomers. This seems a remarkable life-span for such a tiny animal.

They have very soft, short fur of a light chestnut brown on the back and sides, and pure white on the belly. When sitting, their shape is almost spherical, with a long tail and big rounded ears. When alarmed they move so fast they hardly seem to touch the ground. The original two mice always slept together, and after a few days of conflict all new additions to the colony did the same. They groomed themselves frequently, but I never saw them groom each other. I was surprised to see how much water they drank. Apparently in the wild they place smooth pebbles at the entrance to their burrows and lick the dew from them each morning.

Adult wild mice of this species weighed 4.6 - 5.9 g. The one accidentally killed weighed 7.1 g but was probably overweight, having lived a life of luxury. A very pregnant female brought in dead weighed 5.8 g, and contained four foetuses of mean weight 0.57 g (0.50 - 0.64 g) with the placentae and membranes removed. To my great regret, I never succeeded in breeding these mice in captivity.

When I enlarged the colony, I built them a stout wooden cage with a perspex front. This provided endless entertainment for the cats, who would sit and watch them enthralled for hours at a time. The mice were alarmed at first, but very soon realised that the cats could not reach them, and would tantalise them by standing on their hind legs, stretching their front paws up the perspex front as high as they could reach and flashing their white bellies at the frustrated cats.

(It was not until some time later, when a large grey rat *Praomys natalensis* took up residence in my house, that I realised I had inadvertantly brain-washed my hunting cats. They would sit and watch it scuttle around the room with the same absorbed interest as the little *M. minutoides* in their cage and never made the slightest attempt to catch it. Fortunately the problem solved itself when the rat fell into a bucket of water and drowned.)



Mus minutoides - about the size of a marble.

The rodent fauna of Kajiado also includes the crested porcupine *Hystrix cristata* Linnaeus, the spring hare *Pedetes capensis* (Forster) and the unstriped ground squirrel *Xerus rutilus* (Cretzschmar). The silvery mole-rat *Heliophobius argentocinereus* Peters, is here close to the northern limit of its distribution. At Oleserewa, 20 km away and 300 m higher, it is replaced by the larger orange-toothed mole-rat *Tachyoryctes splendens* (Ruppell).

I am most grateful to the Mammal Section of the National Museums of Kenya for identifying specimens for me.

Jo Darlington, c/o Section of Entomology, National Museums of Kenya, Box 40658, Nairobi.

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THE ROAR OF A CROCODILE IN WEST POKOT

It came as a surprise to me, but maybe it is not an uncommon event if one spends plenty of time in company with crocodiles. I find the sound difficult to describe; it was quite like that of a lion, tempered a little with that of an elephant and with an element of wind-tone. The beast lay partly submerged at the edge of the water but rose high on its front legs to roar. Roaring first as I was about to leave the pond, during the late evening, I heard it above the noise of the revving car engine. Having immediately cut the engine I was treated to several more roars and when I returned the next morning it obligingly performed once again.

These events took place on 23 and 24 April, 1983 at a roadside pool 17 km north of the Marich Pass on the new Lodwar road.

The pool is formed by the River Orwa on the upstream side of a road embankment. Although the flow is perennial, during the dry season the whole is diverted for the irrigation of shambas situated at the foot of the western wall of the Rift Valley, when the pool dries up.

When flooded, the area supports an additional variety of birdlife and, during the night, buffalo and other animals visit it to quench their thirst, and maybe wallow in the mud.

I have no idea why the crocodile performed in this way and would be interested to hear from anyone with information on the subject.

Peter Squelch, Box 24220, Nairobi.

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STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF A VARIABLE SUNBIRD AT MIOTONI

A male Variable Sunbird *Nectarinia venusta*, ringed X12003 and banded green/green on 26 March 1982, was watched for over four hours in my garden at Miotoni on Sunday 15 April as it moved about three main plants in front of the verandah within a range of 2 to 4 m. The main plants were, to the right, a shrub with orange flowers *Hamilia patens* and to the left, a clump of purple salvia while at the apex of the triangle a small bouganvillia, beside which was a bird bath and feeding table. Between the Hamilia and the salvia, grain had been scattered.

When the bird was first spotted, its odd behaviour caused us to keep watch and make notes. It was clumsy while trying to probe the Hamilia flowers and it flopped about as if unbalanced, without the sprightly active movements so characteristic of sunbirds. It appeared sick and bedraggled, and when it settled inside the shrub we noted the odd action of its head; a repeated

rapid jerking outwards and upwards as if the bird was gasping, but the bill was closed. The head was jerked as if it was trying to clear an obstruction in the throat. The head jerks ranged from about twelve or so up to forty at the rate of approximately one jerk per second. The following record was made. Time and activity.

11.20 first noted at the Hamilia trying to feed with the head jerking in an unusual manner.
11.50 bird flies to purple salvia where it was immediately attacked by an Amethyst Sunbird *N. amethystina* which knocked it to the ground. The Variable then crept under the broad leaves of a Barbeton Daisy to hide where it stayed for five minutes.
11.55 flies back to the Hamilia and attempts to feed. Flight weak. Then perches inside bush with head jerking.
12.09 flies to Bouganvillia then back to the Hamilia where it attacked and chased off a male Collared Sunbird *Anthreptes collaris*, then attempted to feed.
12.10 flies to Bouganvillia where it remained with head jerking at irregular intervals.
12.27 returned to Hamilia and sits with head jerking.
12.30 attempts to feed.
12.31 sitting with head jerking. Eye is closed. Suddenly moves to Bouganvillia, more head jerking.
12.40 moves position in Bouganvillia continues head jerking.
12.45 returns to Hamilia, attempts to feed, fails, then just sits with head jerking.
12.50 another attempt to feed, then settles.
12.55 another attempt to feed.
12.56 indulges in considerable side to side bill wiping.
12.58 another attempt to feed.
12.59 another Variable Sunbird arrives at the Hamilia.
13.00 subject moves to purple salvia and just sits with head jerking.
13.08 returns to Hamilia and sits, contiues head jerking.
13.09 attacks the other Variable then goes to the Bouganvillia.
13.10 moves to purple salvia and attacks a Collared Sunbird which crosses to the Hamilia, followed by the subject, Collared moves to salvia and is driven off.
13.12 subject lost.
13.13 found in the Hamilia where it attacks a Northern Double-collared Sunbird *N. preussi* then tries to feed. Goes to purple salvia and attacks a Collared Sunbird. Sits in salvia.
13.17 moves to Hamilia and attacks a Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* then tries to feed.
13.19 sitting, bill wiping, preening, head jerking.
13.22 moves to Bouganvillia and just sits with head jerking.
13.25 returns to Hamilia, tries to feed, sits wiping bill, preens with head jerking.
13.31 feeds at three flowers, sits with bill wiping. Sits pulsating all over strongly and head jerking then moves.
13.37 lost (many other birds in the Hamilia).
13.49 found again, feeds for one minute.
13.51 sits, bill wiping and head jerking.
13.55 feeds at six flowers, apparently successfully then sits, bill wiping, moves further into the bush out of sight. Flight is still weak.
14.02 comes out and attempts to feed, still clumsy.
14.05 just sitting with head jerking.
14.10 tries again to feed, then sits head jerking and whole body pulsating strongly, tail moving up and down.

14.16 falls to the ground, head jerking furiously, strong pulsations
14.19 moves up into Hamilia and sees off a male Collared Sunbird then sits with head jerking, scratches head and drops down into a small plant, sitting just above ground level, head jerking.
14.21 moves up into Hamilia and attacks a male Collared Sunbird then attempts to feed, sits head jerking.
14.24 another attempt to feed clumsily, then sits.
14.33 feeds apparently successfully at five flowers then sits with head jerking violently.
14.34 falls to the ground, strong pulsations, then creeps into shelter between plant stems and rock, now appears to be gasping, wings fluttering and strong pulsations. On the ground for six minutes, meanwhile a Collared Sunbird flies into the Hamilia.
14.40 subject scrambles up into Hamilia and sees off the sunbird. Flies to the Bouganvillia and returns to the Hamilia, feeds at two flowers then returns to bouganvillia then back to Hamilia and attacks a female Collared Sunbird then a female Double-collared Sunbird. Sits with head jerking.
14.46 sees off the female Double-collared Sunbird, which had returned, then tries to feed.
14.48 sees off both the male and female Collared Sunbirds - seems very active all of a sudden.
14.52 in the hamilia shrub but out of sight.
14.54 found, many other birds in the shrub but comes out to drive off female Collared Sunbird, regular fight in the Hamilia.
14.57 female Collared Sunbird returns into the shrub but is driven off. The Variable in aggressive posture, wings half expanded, head thrust forward, then sits again with head jerking.
15.00 lose sight of it.
15.02 found, feeding then enters shrub and goes out of sight.
15.06 comes out and feeds successfully on six or seven flowers then goes into shrub and out of sight.
15.11 out, feeding actively for two minutes.
15.13 returns into shrub, sits bill wiping and head jerking.
15.14 out to feed again until 15.16 then flies off out of sight. Flight still rather weak.
15.51 suddenly returns to the Hamilia, feeds, seems active.
15.53 goes to purple salvia then back to the Hamilia.
15.54 sits, much bill wiping and preening, but no sign of head jerking.
15.58 out feeding then flies off out of sight.
17.12 returns to Hamilia and feeds actively. Now seems normal

The following day at 17.30 h was feeding at the Hamilia apparently normal and healthy.

DISCUSSION Head jerking: the cause of this condition could not be ascertained and though it lasted nearly four hours, it gradually ceased with no signs at 15.54. The condition caused me to think that the bird had suffered a head injury such as slight concussion after flying into a window, or possibly from a peck on the head by the larger aggressive Amethyst Sunbird. A head injury could also account for the instability in flight and in the clumsiness while attempting to feed.

At first I considered that maybe the bill had become 'gummed-up' so that the tongue could not be extruded to suck nectar, this might have happened had the bird been feeding at flowers of a Euphorbia species, further support for this hypothesis was in the frequency of bill wiping and the time taken by it as this is an uncommon activity among sunbirds. I did not see the bill open except at 14.34 when the bird had fallen to the ground and was gasping. A second possibility was that the nostrils may have been invaded by minute nostril mites causing a blockage, hence difficulty in breathing which resulted

in the head jerking action. On account of the rapid pulse rate and its apparent sick condition I quite expected to see the bird fall dead and it did drop to the ground on two occasions. I was tempted to try and catch it. I feel that the bird must have been slightly concussed.

Aggression: The Amethyst Sunbird attacked the Variable even knocking it to the ground, but the apparently concussed Variable was equally aggressive towards smaller sunbirds which ventured into the Hamilia and even attacked its own species. It seemed that this Variable regarded the Hamilia as its own special feeding resource. It was remarkable that this sick bird could so rapidly spot and attack intruders.

G.R. Cunningham-van Someren, Department of Ornithology, National Museums of Kenya, Box 40658, Nairobi.

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HARAMBEE REARING OF OWLS

"Baby dies as mother goes drinking". Read this in the news the other day. Shocking! Some representatives of the 'progressive' human race have at times less care for their offspring than most of the species in the rest of the animal world. The following true story gives us evidence of the surprising extent to which the parental instinct in animals can exert itself.

Some years ago, as we were raking out the accumulated rubbish from the chimney of a fireplace that had not been in use for a number of years, a faint chirruping from its dark inner recesses became audible. Further 'excavations' resulted in four queer-looking soot-balls coming tumbling out. Because they were covered in dust, cobwebs, twigs and soot, it was at first difficult to make head or tail of the fluffy, flipping little creatures who did not seem very comfortable being extricated from their dark abode. While we were discussing what species they could possibly belong to, one of our servants took a small twig and wrote 'OWL' on his arm, explaining that he did not know how to pronounce it in English.

That was it. We were now obviously faced with the alternative of either letting these young, fluffy owl-offspring die a sudden death or meet the challenge of trying to keep them alive. I decided to give the latter alternative a try. My new charges were housed in an empty chicken cage. One of the owls was in pretty bad shape, probably due to the harsh treatment by the rake used in the chimney, and it was soon found dead in the corner of the cage.

Now there was the question of food. Optimistically I tried to tempt them with various meat dishes, but neither these nor the intestines of a butchered hen left in the cage overnight seemed to belong to owl-delicacies. The poor little nocturnal birds just huddled miserably in a corner of the cage staring vacantly out into the blinding sunlight. The following evening, some hours after dusk, as I was doing my evening rounds, I again paid my charges a visit to see if my latest attempt to entice them to some food had been successful, I found outside the cage door a dead mouse. Gripping it by the tip of its tail, I swung it inside the cage. The next moment, two hungry owls were tearing their supper to pieces. The third one, however, did not seem to have any appetite for what appeared to be a real treat to the other two. But where did the mouse come from? I was young in Kenya, but this I knew, we did not usually have dead mice being dropped around us. I suspected that there was a conscious reason and purpose for this one being left just at the cage door in the immediate proximity of the starving little birds. My suspicions made me get up before the sunrise the following morning to check up on the situation. Never had I been so delighted at the sight of some dead mice as I was when

I was able to serve the expectant owls their breakfast, consisting of two little mice, the 'tailway'.

My assumptions had been correct. The strong parental instinct of the owl parents to care for their youngsters had, in spite of the human interference, stood its test. Somehow they understood that the prey they had caught for their offspring and left at the cage door fulfilled its purpose though they missed the pleasure of seeing the food being devoured by their young ones. Or did they? In my imagination I sensed the owl-parents' piercing eyes in the darkness and felt their silent movement from tree to tree as they followed me to check up on whether I fulfilled my part of the 'deal' as a foster-mother. Occasionally, remembering exaggerated stories about enraged owls attacking supposed enemies, hacking out their eyes, I donned my "Livingstone sun-helmet" as I went on my moonlit rounds to feed my proteges, though I definitely had nothing to fear.

The one little owl that never took any interest in the food from the start got in a weak state and was attacked by safari-ants so we found it most merciful to put an end to its existence. But the other two thrived on the diet provided by the agile and conscientious parents. Their most sumptuous supper consisted of six 'delicious' little mice, surely a real treat.

As the owls grew they became more lively, flapping their wings vigourously against the netting of the cage and letting out peculiar hoarse squeaks, especially in the early evenings. As they eventually seemed to be able to stand on their own the cage door was left open one evening. The birds took the hint and the following morning there were neither owls nor dead mice near the cage.

When later I occasionally heard an owl hoot at night from the big cypress trees on the premises, I took it as a special personal greeting from one of my former nocturnal pets.

Gunhild Andersson, P.O. Box 1433, Kisii, Kenya.

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AN EMINENT EAST AFRICAN BOTANIST RETIRES

Jan Bevington Gillett, born in England in May 1911, first came to East Africa in 1951 when he was the botanist attached to the Kenya/Ethiopia Boundary Commission (1951 - 52).

After this assignment he returned to Kew Herbarium in England but came back to East Africa in August 1964 as the Botanist in Charge of the East African Herbarium, Nairobi. He held this position until June 1971 but then continued as botanist until June 1976 when he retired. On retirement he decided to stay and work at the East African Herbarium on a voluntary basis. It was then that he was made Honorary Botanist to the National Museums, which he held until he left Nairobi on 9 May 1984.

He was known for his extensive knowledge of plants, their taxonomy and ecology, and his enthusiasm in answering queries in connection with these and other subjects will never be forgotten by the many callers at the Herbarium.

He collected extensively both in Northeastern Kenya while on the Boundary Commission and elsewhere in Kenya and Tanzania and in the last four years in Somalia. On his last trip to Somalia in 1983 his collection series passed 23 340 specimens.

Mr Gillett contributed extensively to the botanical knowledge in Eastern Africa by collecting material, writing papers and spreading information concerning useful literature sources.

He was our expert on Leguminous plants and had a specialist interest in *Indigofera* among others. He teamed up with Dr Bernard Verdcourt, another

former botanist in charge of the East African Herbarium, and Dr Roger Polhill (both of Kew) to write up the large and important subfamily Papilionoideae of Leguminosae for the Flora of Tropical East Africa. Later he became interested in the family Burseraceae which he hopes to write up for the same Flora, and made many collecting trips to collect members of the genus *Commiphora*, which are mostly not well collected, and therefore difficult to study from Herbarium specimens.

Most of all, his never-ending concern for the welfare of the East African Herbarium as a viable institution will always be remembered. To this end he also donated a wealth of books and finances.

Mr Gillett joined the Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Kenya in 1965, and served in that capacity until 1980. Throughout his term as a trustee, he made many invaluable contributions, bringing his perspective to bear on a wide variety of difficult issues that ranged from personnel and training of young scientists to the broad question of scientific policy for the museum. One of the most significant contributions was his constant concern for the safety of the East African Herbarium. He consistently campaigned for the long term needs of this institution and his efforts were rewarded in 1982 when the Herbarium finally became a constituent part of the National Museums.

Mr Gillett's extreme love for the people and the countries of East Africa is reflected in the fact that after his retirement from Government service in 1976, he continued to serve the Herbarium on a voluntary basis for nine years living entirely on a pension from Britain. During his stay in Nairobi, he trained many local taxonomists and arranged scholarships for most of them to train in overseas universities and herbaria. His vast knowledge of the botanical exploration of East Africa will be greatly missed by many of us already used to his lectures on the subject.

Mr Gillett was a great botanist in East Africa, and we all wish him and his wife a long and very happy retirement in the United Kingdom.

Professor J.O. Kokwaro, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi.

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REVIEWS

RHINO EXPLOITATION. The trade in Rhino products in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, Japan and South Korea. By Esmond Bradley Martin, 1983. Hong Kong: World Wildlife Fund. pp. 126 illustrated with black and white photographs. Price US$7.50 including airmail postage, from WWF Hong Kong (1005 Wing On Building, 22A Des Voeux Road C., Hong Kong).

In this short easy-read book Esmond Bradley Martin takes us on a tour of the traditional medicine shops of the East in a search to discover the extent to which rhino products are used in local medicine today, and for what purposes. His fascination with traditional medicine is evident as he recounts findings obtained from visits to more than 135 medicine shops in the region. He introduces us to the exotic and the bizarre; in India to the external application of crushed dried worms or forest slugs as sexual stimulants, in Rangoon Zoo to and the sight of people catching hot rhino urine in narrow necked bottles to drink as a cure for sore throats and asthma.

What emerges from beneath this easily told tale, however, is much more serious. Large numbers of people in the East actually do use rhino products (horn, skin, urine and even, in some places, the dried stomach contents) not so much for aphrodisiac purposes, as common knowledge would have it, but as cures for every day ailments like fevers, colds and stomach upsets. Although

the retail prices of rhino products seem astronomically high (figures are quoted for a kilo of African rhino horn of $11 615 in Singapore, $11 103 in Hong Kong, $4 127 in Macao and $1 620 in Tokyo) the actual amounts used per medicament are so small that the price to the customer is low enough for most to afford. The customer does not feel hard done by, however, because the rhino horn is usually given bulk by being mixed with a number of other less costly medicines, mainly herbs. Thus there are many thousands of ordinary people throughout the East who regularly use rhino product based medicines in much the same way as we use aspirins and alkaseltzer. This is the worrying feature for unless we can persuade these folk to change their ways and can promote the use of culturally acceptable alternatives to rhino products - and several are suggested in the book - the world's rhinos are doomed. Even more disturbing is the finding that most people prefer to use products from species of Asian rhinos whose numbers are currently down to such low levels that they are now poised on the threshold of extinction in the wild. For them it may already be too late for an awareness campaign and an acceptable substitute programme to have any effect. To save these species new and more drastic measures will have to be taken such as artificial insemination and embryo transplants to build up populations in sanctuaries outside their Asian homelands. Later when cultural conditions permit, they can be reintroduced to their native lands, as was done successfully with the Hawaiian Goose, and is now being done with the Arabian oryx in Oman and Jordan. This book indicates just how essential it is for a conservation strategy to understand and consider the global pressures on a species and not just to rely on the more traditional but limited local anti-poaching approach.

If, however, like me, you have a quantitative turn of mind and like to measure and count to find out about the world in which we live and how it works, you automatically turn to the numbers given in support of an argument and look at them with a critical eye. When you do this with Dr Martin's book you are in for a few surprises.

There seem to be several hundred errors in the supporting tables. some are just plain errors, a few must be typographic, but the majority have almost certainly come about when weights and dollar prices have been rounded up or down to eliminate the decimals. Nevertheless, when I multiply 34 by 10 I like it to come to 340 and not 339 (page 106). The majority of these discrepancies are small in size and they do not greatly affect the story that is told. They do however, reflect a careless attention to detail, exemplified also in another way by the photo credit opposite page 69, for unless Peter Beard is a lot older than the rest of us think, he certainly did not take the classic early settler gut-shot rhino kill picture that is shown. In a work that rightly has converted the esoteric weights, measures (page 146) and moneys of the East into the more familiar metric system and US dollar values, Dr Martin's apparent devil-may-care attitude to the fine details of the data he presents leaves one with the nagging feeling that perhaps he did not get some of the basic details right either.

M.D. Gwynne

BIRDS OF EAST AFRICA An Unreliable Field Guide. By David Bygott 1984. Nairobi: Ines May Publicity. pp.44 Price Sh. 15/-.

This 'slim' volume, copiously illustrated by the author will be of interest both to the not so serious 'Birder' and to the earnest and erudite 'Ornithologist'.

The text gives helpful hints on "How to bluff your way through Ornithology" and tips to tour leaders as well as much other useful information.

The illustrations are evocative and apt, particularly the Zebra Waxbill, the Eagles and many others. A good present for both the characters depicted on the back cover. Available from the Society Office.

D.E. Backhurst

A NEW BOOK FOR SALE

THE SEDGES AND RUSHES OF EAST AFRICA

A flora of Cyperaceae and Juncaceae of East Africa, 404 pages

By R.W. Haines and K.A. Lye

Now available from the publishers: East African Natural History Society, Nairobi.

SPECIAL PRICE: Kshs. 250/- (E.A.N.H.S. members only)
Kshs. 275/- (Non-members)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Further to our account of the Uganda National Park, *Bulletin*, 1984:29, I visted Mweya again at the end of April and it is better than ever. There were some three dozen visitors and one launch was full of birdwatchers, just like the old days. The gift shop sells french perfume. All the tracks along the channel are freshly graded and all the signs are accurate and show in the right direction.

Imre Loefler, Box 47964, Nairobi.

Sir,

Pygmy Kingfisher

We have seen this lovely little bird for years in our garden - nearly always diving into our pond (washing?) so I was never really sure whether it was a Pygmy or a Malachite Kingfisher. It was always diving quickly into thick foliage where I couldn't find it. Until a few days ago!. TWO birds were sitting on the clothes line where we could observe them properly. No doubt, i.e. absolutely no crest - even when the birds got excited. They were diving for insects into the grass banks, and the lovely purple "cheeks" much in evidence.

We watched the birds for several days often displaying pointing beaks skywards and jumping over each other. Another time one bird was doing wing display a'la Striped Kingfisher and all the time we would hear them cheeping a highpitched, often repeated call.

A breeding record?

Lise Campbell, Box 14469, Nairobi.

Sir,

Since arriving in Western Australia, 18 months ago, Helen and I have made many good friends and have tremendous fun with the meetings and "Camp-outs" of the Royal Australian Ornithological Union, the W.A. Naturalists Club and the W.A. Wild Flower Society, all of which are very enterprising and active groups. The R.A.O.U.'s Bird atlas, that has occupied the last four years, will be published next month.

Should any member of the E.A.N.H.S. visit W.A. we would be delighted to offer hospitality and introduce them to the W.A. flora and fauna. We are only ½ hour from Perth airport and live in the forested hills of the Darling Range, some 25 km south of the City.

Helen and I send our kind regards to your members.

John Start, 2 Alice Road, Roleystone, Western Australia 6111.

NOTICE TO WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKERS

Dear Folks,

OOOPS! I think I've goofed all these years over the identification of the Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala* vs. the Fan-tailed Warbler *Schoenicola platyura*.

Some years ago, when I was trying to find out which warbler lived in reed-beds in the Nairobi area and sang "ti - ti - ti - tititititititi ti", someone suggested it might be a Fan-tailed Warbler. Sight records seemed to confirm this: the singer flew over the reeds with snapping wings and had a noticeably long, broad tail. So we began calling both sight records (in flight) and voice records as Fan-tailed Warbler. We recorded it often, especially at the Carnivore, Faulkner's Farm and Peter Greensmith Nurseries.

In January we heard the bird in Kabete, and Yvonne Malcolm-Coe called it a Little Rush Warbler. We did not argue the point at the time, but I still thought it was a Fan-tailed Warbler, based on sight confirmation. The bird-walks had occasionally recorded the Little Rush Warbler too - from the front, the marks on the throat made identification easy.

Further research in Praed and Grant have yielded some revealing statements. Under Little Rush Warbler on Page 370 (vol.2, old edition), top of page, it describes the habits of the Little Rush Warbler: "During their short flights over or among the vegetation, their wings make a curious snapping noise. The rather long tail is noticeable in the field."

Further on, under habits (not call!) of the next sub-species, it adds: "the call is a series of notes sounding like "thri" on an accelerating and descending scale."

From this description and Yvonne's identification, I would suggest that all records of Fan-tailed Warbler on the Wednesday morning birdwalks be changed to Little Rush Warbler.

Fleur Ng'weno, Box 42271, Nairobi.

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FOR SALE

Four wheel drive Subaru, reconditioned engine. KPZ097. Price Sh.30 000 negotiable Available Late June/early July. E. Davie. Tel: (Office 25981 ext.265, House 29935)

Suzuki LJ80 4-wheel-drive vehicle 1983 model, in "as new" condition 13 000 km. Offers to Ralph and Barbara Bryan Tel: House 26060 Office 559466.

McGraw-Hill encyclopedia of Science and Technology complete set 3rd edition 1971, 15 vols. plus 5 yearbooks, reader's guide and study guide. Sh.8 000/- Contact: Biology AUEA, Box 2500, Eldoret.

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SYMPOSIUM

The Kenya Museum Society and the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation of Pasadena, California will co-sponser an all day symposium on Saturday 18 August, 1984. This will start at 9 a.m. and will end at approximately 5 p.m. and will be held in the Louis Leakey Memorial Hall at the National Museum.

The subject of the symposium will be "Hominid Evolution in the African Savannas". After a short address by Mr Richard Leakey, the following speakers will deliver their papers:

Dr Mary Leakey, Dr Glyn Isaac, Dr Shirley Strum, Dr David Western,

Dr Irven Devone and Dr Francis Howell, who will chair the symposium. Entrance, by ticket only will be Sh.50/- A light luncheon will be available. All welcome.

Kenya Museum Society

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NOTICES

The Secretary would welcome any suggestions from members as to suitable places to visit on Society excursions. If any up-country members have local knowledge of interesting areas in their district and would be willing to lead trips or give advice, please inform me as relative new-comers to the country do not always have information of this sort at hand. Secretary, EANHS, Box 44486, Nbi.

The Secretary, Barbara Bryan will be leaving Kenya in September this year, so we are appealing for a member (or anyone interested) to offer his/her services in this capacity. The job involves keeping the office open three half days per week, attending monthly executive Committee meetings, duplicating the bi-monthly *Bulletin*, handling correspondence and membership enquiries. There are several voluntary helpers to asist in this work, however, we also URGENTLY need help in the office on a REGULAR basis - even if only one half day per week. The Society office is an interesting place to work, and gives you the opportunity to meet new people and learn more about the Society itself. Please write or call the Secretary during office hours, which are Monday and Friday 9.30 to 12.30, Wednesday 2 to 5 p.m. Help is also always needed in collating the *Bulletin* every two months; an onerous task, made so much lighter with many hands. So please consider helping, thereby ensuring that members receive their *Bulletins* on time. The Sept/Oct edition will be collated in late August/early September. Please ring the Secretary - 742131 during office hours.

APPEAL FOR NEW MEMBERS

As there are always quite a few members leaving the country regularly and new people arriving, we ask you to consider recruiting new members amongst your friends and acquaintances so that the Society membership remains stable. If any of you teach here, suggest to the students that they can join the Society for Sh.10/- (annual junior subscription), as it is important to interest the young people in Natural History.

POT-LUCK OUTINGS

These outings, held on the second Sunday of each month, are strictly INFORMAL, that is to say there is not a regular leader and those who meet on the second Sunday morning of the month decide where they would like to go and who should lead.

Secretary, EANHS, Box 44486, Nairobi.

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WANTED

The joint Library of the East Africa Natural History Society and National Museum is urgently in need of a serviceable FLOOR POLISHER to meet additional demand resulting from the recent expansion of the Library. As not enough funds are available to purchase a new machine, the Librarian would like to hear from anyone who has such a floor polisher and would consider selling it to the Library at reasonable cost.

Please contact the Librarian Mr J. otike, National Museum, Nairobi. Tel.742131 extension 15.

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SOCIETY FUNCTIONS

MONDAY 23rd July, 1984: In the Museum Hall at 5.30 p.m. Mike Norton-Griffiths, of Ecosystems Ltd., will give a talk entitled "Land use pressure on the Tsavo National Park", this will be illustrated with colour transparencies.

WEEKEND EXCURSION 11th and 12th August, 1984. Mrs Barbara Bryan will lead an excursion to El samere, Lake Naivasha. Since camping is not allowed, we are limited by the number of rooms available. These consist of 6 doubles and one single, however, 3 of the double rooms are big enough to take an extra bed, thus we are limited to 16 people only. If there is a good response we may be able to offer additional trips at a later date or dates.

Cost per person full board is Sh.200/- .

ACTIVITIES: The warden will show a film on the Saturday evening, relating to conservation. He will also be happy to lead an excursion into the southern hill area of 'Hell's Gate' on the Sunday. In this area there are spectacular views of the gorge, the geothermal project and views of the volcano Lengai, in Tanzania (on a clear day!). This trip would involve taking lunch and then possibly returning to Nairobi from there. If you have lunch at the Elsamere centre on the Saturday, it will cost you extra for Sunday lunch, unless you choose to bring it with you.

However, as a four-wheel drive will be necessary to drive into the gorge, perhaps members can arrange to share transport to allow for this. It is also recommended that you travel to Elsamere via the NORTH LAKE ROAD, as the South Lake Road is still in terrible condition (unless you have a four-wheel drive vehicle).

If you would like to take part, please fill in the enclosed form and return it to The Secretary, EANHS, Box 44486, Nairobi. FIRST COME FIRST SERVED.

MONDAY 13th August, 1984: In the Museum Hall at 5.30 p.m. Dr Graham Reid of the Department of Zoology, University of Nairobi will give a lecture entitled "River Blindness: from Kenya to Guatemala". River Blindness, transmitted by blackflies, has been responsible for forcing people out of prime agricultural land from East to West Africa and in South America. The fight against this disease started here in Kenya and continues today in West Africa and South America. What are the chances of success?

WEDNESDAY MORNING bird walks continue, led by Mrs Fleur Ng'weno. Please meet at the National Museum at 8.45 a.m. sharp.

INFORMAL "Pot Luck" outings are held on the second Sunday of each month. Mrs Ng'weno cannot always lead them, but members wishing to participate are invited to attend with good ideas as to where to go, and are asked to invite one of their number to lead them. See above.

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NOTICE TO ANYONE INTERESTED IN BIRDS

Are you a birdwatcher/Photographer/ringer newly arrived in Kenya and in sear h of details of local birds, good areas to visit, relevant literature, ringing and other research schemes ? See the *EANHS Bulletin* 1983:65 - 71; 1983:83 - 87 and this issue p.71 for extensive information.

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THE EAST AFRICAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Chairman: Prof. J.O. Kokwaro
Vice-Chairman: Dr. A.D. Lewis
Joint Editors: Jl E. African Nat. History Soc. Nat. Mus: Dr. J.J. Hebrard and Dr. D. Widdowson
Secretary: Mrs. B. Bryan
Treasurer: Dr. S.G. Njuguna
Hon. Librarian: Miss P. Allen
Executive Committee: (in addition to the above) Mr. G.C. Backhurst (Ringing Organiser), Mr. N.K. arap Chumo, Dr. D.J. Pearson, Mr. D.K. Richards, Mr. D.A. Turner.
Co-opted Members: Mr. P. Davey, Mrs. J. Hayes, Mr. J.S. Karmali, Mrs. F. Ng'weno, Mrs. A.L. Campbell, Dr. C. Gakahu
Journal Editorial Sub-Committee: Dr. J.J. Hebrard, Dr. D. Widdowson.
Ornithological Sub-Committee: Dr. D.J. Pearson, D.A. Turner, G.C. Backhurst, Dr. A.D. Lewis, T. Stevenson, D.K. Richards, Dr. M.E. Smalley, Dr. K.M. Howell & N.E. Baker (Tanzania), Dr. M.J. Carswell, Prof. D.E. Pomeroy (Uganda), B.S. Meadows, J.S.S. Beesley & J.F. Reynolds (United Kingdom).
Joint Library Sub-Committee: (Society representatives) Miss P. Allen & Mr. N. arap Chumo.
Nest Record Scheme Organiser: Mr. P.B. Taylor
Bulletin Editor: Mrs. D. Backhurst

MEMBERSHIP

This offers you free entry to the National Museum, Nairobi; free lectures, films, slide shows or discussions every month in Nairobi; field trips and camps led by experienced guides; free use of the Joint Society-National Museum Library (postal borrowing is possible); reciprocal arrangements with the Uganda Museum, Kampala; family participation; wives and children of members may attend most Society functions; one copy of the EANHS Bulletin every two months; a copy of each Journal published during your period of membership; the Society controls the ringing of birds in East Africa and welcomes new ringers and runs an active Nest Record Scheme; activities such as plant mapping and game counting are undertaken on a group basis. Membership rates are given at the foot of this page.

JOURNAL

The Society publishes The Journal of the East African Natural History Society and National Museum. Each issue consists of one paper, however, sometimes two or more short papers may be combined to form one number. The aim of this method of presentation is to ensure prompt publication of scientific information; a title page is issued at the end of each year so that the year's papers may be bound together. Contributions, which should be typed in double spacing on one side of the paper, with wide margins, should be sent to the Secretary, Box 44486, Nairobi, Kenya. Authors receive twenty-five reprints of their article free, provided that these are ordered at the time the proofs are returned.

E.A.N.H.S. BULLETIN

This is a duplicated magazine issued six times a year, which exists for the rapid publication of short notes, articles, letters and reviews. Contributions, which may be written in clear handwriting or typed, should be sent to The Editor (EANHS Bulletin), Box 44486, Nairobi, Kenya. Line drawings will be considered if they add to the value of the article. Photographs cannot be published.

SCOPUS

The Ornithological Sub-Committee publishes this bird journal five times a year. Cost: EANHS members KSHS.75/- p.a. All correspondence to D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi, Kenya.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	LOCAL	OVERSEAS
Institutional (schools, libraries) . . . annual payment:	KShs.100/-	US$ 11.00 £st. 7.00
Full Local and overseas . . . annual payment:	KShs.100/-	US$ 11.00 £st. 7.00
Junior (full-time student, no Journal supplied) . . . annual payment:	K.Shs.10/-	US$ 4.00 £st. 2.50
Life Membership	KShs.1500/-	US$ 144.00 £st.90.00

Subscriptions are due 1st January. From 1st July you may join for KShs.50/- and receive publications from that date. Application forms for membership are obtainable from the Secretary, Box 44486, Nairobi.

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